

Financial Administration

I suggest that there are added reasons why steps should be taken to have this copy of the public accounts before the members of this house. In the motion now before us and now in committee there is reference to the position of the Auditor General. For that reason I suggest that it is appropriate that I should mention the strong reasons why every member of this house should have a copy of this report in this session. During the session we have been discussing the cost of living, inflation and related subjects. Here in this last report of the Auditor General, as of March 31 this year, is most conclusive proof of the reckless extravagance of this government which should be in the hands of every member while this special session is still in progress. Attention has been called to such unexplainable waste as the renting of property in the city of Ottawa for \$70,000, for space not occupied by anyone during that time. That is only one of many examples. The report speaks of the case where contracts were let on tender, and then, by agreement with the successful tenderer, new arrangements were made without any tender for more than twice the original amount; and so it goes through this report. At a time when we are discussing the cost of government, which is a factor contributing to inflation, and while we are discussing the possibility of saving money in every way we can, these are reasons why every member should have in his hand a copy of this report. That can be done if any serious effort is made to complete it for the members who will be sitting on this committee and for the rest of the members of the house.

Mr. James Sinclair (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance): I think I should say a few words in this respect. The Department of Finance tabled the report in accordance with the act and turned the manuscript copy over to the king's printer. I think perhaps the inquiry of the leader of the opposition as to printing could best be directed to the Secretary of State. At the same time I would point out that the king's printer has an especially heavy burden this session because of the printing of daily proceedings. I know that the committee on combines legislation, of which I am a member, has asked for and has received permission to get their proceedings printed overnight, as is our own *Hansard*, so that we have them the following day. In any event, I am quite sure that the Secretary of State will ask the king's printer to expedite the printing of this document.

As to how important this document is in connection with the study of the financial administration act, I would point out that the Auditor General came before the public

accounts committee two years ago when we made this thorough and valuable study of both the form of the public accounts and the form of the estimates. As hon. members know, the form of the estimates has since been changed because of the recommendations of that committee. In the recommendations of the public accounts committee made in the report that year were incorporated most of the suggestions of the Auditor General. The hon. member for Eglinton is listening to me; and he will recall the excellent study we made at that time. As hon. members will find, those valuable recommendations of the Auditor General have been incorporated, for the most part, into the new act. That is the reason why the Minister of Finance is anxious to have this bill referred back to the public accounts committee which made that study two years ago, and whose members already have a fairly good, practical working knowledge of the provisions of the present Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act and also of the weaknesses of that act.

The Auditor General's report is, I believe, available in separate pamphlet form. That, of course, is the part which is attached at the end of the public accounts; at least I saw a separate form which had been made available, I think, to the press gallery the day I tabled it here. But on the main public accounts, that is the statistical summary of the public accounts of Canada for the fiscal year ended last March—that is the major part of the volume that the leader of the opposition has—that is in the hands of the king's printer. I am sure that the Secretary of State has listened to the observations of the leader of the opposition and will do his best to see that a copy is made available as soon as possible.

I myself have been through the entire work of this financial administration bill and it is my opinion that the statistical information in the public accounts or the review of irregularities which the Auditor General has reported in accordance with the instructions of his position are not of great significance in the study of the new act. I think our work on that was done two years ago, and most members of the committee on public accounts at that time have a good knowledge of what the Auditor General recommended. When this bill goes to committee we of course intend to have before the committee all the public servants who are connected with this bill. The hon. member for Kamloops quite rightly described this bill as the key bill of government. It is that, because there is no more important function in responsible government than to have public control over the receipt, disbursement and audit of public